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BOHLS: LIVE FROM ROGER GOODELL'S BASEMENT

We're just over a week away from a virtual NFL draft that will be very different

Austin American-Statesman

Wednesday, April 15, 2020 statesman.com | @statesman | Facebook.com/statesman | $2

Austin's new mask rules

Here's what you need to know

Covering our faces in Austin. Top row from left: Caleb Allison, RJ Tillman, Patricia Alba. Second row: Jose Garcia, Anthony Jerome Benskin, Molly Gipson. Bottom row: Susan Lindsey, Bryan Seacrest, Marcia Cades. [NICK WAGNER/AMERICAN-STATESMAN]

Austin and Travis County on Monday extended to May 8 public health orders that now include requirements for people to wear facial covers when in public. So what are the rules and best practices?

Everyone older than 10 must wear facial coverings when in public.
Exceptions can be made for when people are exercising, are outside only with members of their household or are eating or drinking.

Facial coverings are required while using public transportation.
That includes ride-hailing services, taxis and buses — plus even while pumping gas. But they are not required while riding in a personal vehicle.

Travel is restricted for people who have tested positive for COVID-19.
Those individuals, as well as their household members, are prohibited from leaving the city of Austin or Travis County unless they get approval from Austin Public Health.

Restrictions on business operations under the previous orders remain in place.
The idea is to limit the spread of the virus to prevent the city's health care infrastructure from becoming overwhelmed with patients.

See MORE TIPS, A6

Mask order could extend past May

'Nobody expects this is just going to go away,' county health authority says

By Philip Jankowski
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People should be prepared for coronavirus face-covering mandates issued Monday to last well beyond their current May 8 expiration date, said Dr. Mark Escott, interim health authority for Austin and Travis County.

Tuesday was the first day that Travis County residents fell under the new requirements that Austin Mayor Steve Adler and Travis County Judge Sarah Eckhardt issued as part of the latest health orders designed to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

But Escott said the requirement for facial coverings in public could remain in place even after some social distancing requirements are lifted and businesses reopen.

"The requirement for facial coverings is likely to be a long-standing requirement," Escott said. "You know, nobody expects that this thing is just going to go away."

"It's going to become part of our culture, at least in the short and intermediate terms," Escott continued. "It's something we have to embrace now as something that's critical over the next three-week period."

Requiring facial coverings is the latest effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the disease

See ORDER, A6

A special session to redraw districts?

Census delay would force lawmakers to take up redistricting late

By Jonathan Tilove
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A delayed 2020 census count likely would force the Texas Legislature to draw new congressional and state legislative districts during a special session in summer 2021, and perhaps repeat the process for Texas House and Senate districts two years later.

The minimum four-month delay in completing the decennial census, being sought by the Census Bureau, might also end up pushing back the date of the March 2022 party primaries.

On Monday, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross announced that, as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, all Census Bureau field operations would be canceled until June 1, and the agency would not be able to complete the count until Oct. 31.

Ross wants Congress to enact legislation delaying the

See DISTRICTS, A4

Texas abortion providers get partial victory

Appeals court lets drug-induced abortions resume amid coronavirus emergency

By Chuck Lindell
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In a partial victory for Texas abortion providers, a federal appeals court has allowed drug-induced abortions to resume despite efforts by state officials to ban the procedures as part of the coronavirus emergency.

State lawyers failed to show that dispensing drugs for medication abortions — which typically involve two doses of pills taken first at a clinic, then at home — qualifies as a "procedure" under Gov. Greg Abbott's emergency order banning elective surgeries and procedures, the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals concluded.

See ABORTION, A8

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UNUSUAL ALLIES UNITE ON OIL CUTS

Some energy companies and environmental groups agree about limiting production

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TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Mostly sunny	Mostly sunny	Cloudy
67° / 47°	76° / 60°	75° / 57°